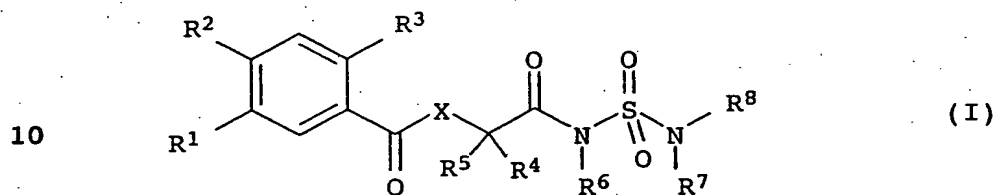


We claim:

1. A 3-heterocyclyl-substituted benzoic acid derivative of the
5 formula I

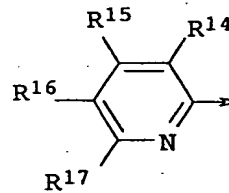
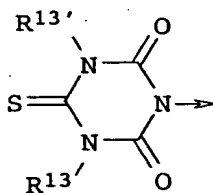
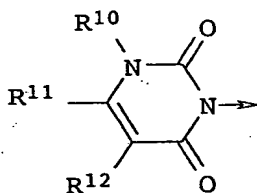


15 where:

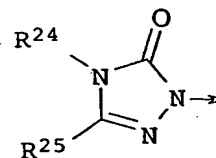
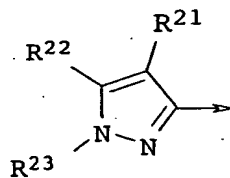
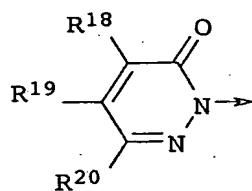
X is oxygen or NR⁹,

R¹ is a heterocyclic radical of the formulae II-A to II-H,

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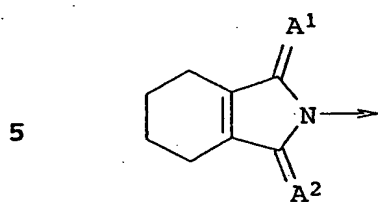


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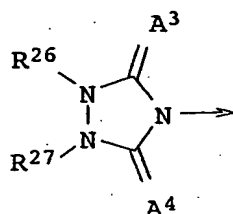
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(II-G)



(II-H)

10 R^2 is hydrogen or halogen,

R^3 is halogen or cyano,

15 R^4 , R^5 independently of one another are hydrogen, C_1 - C_4 -alkyl or C_1 - C_4 -alkoxy, or R^4 and R^5 together are a group $=CH_2$,

R^6 is hydrogen, C_1 - C_4 -alkyl or C_1 - C_4 -alkoxy,

20 R^7 , R^8 independently of one another are hydrogen, C_1 - C_6 -alkyl, C_3 - C_6 -alkenyl, C_3 - C_6 -alkynyl, C_1 - C_4 -haloalkyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkoxy- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkylthio- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkylsulfinyl- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkylsulfonyl- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl,

25 cyano- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkoxycarbonyl- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, amino- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkylamino- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, di(C_1 - C_4 -alkyl)amino- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, aminocarbonyl- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, (C_1 - C_4 -alkylamino)carbonyl- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl,

30 di(C_1 - C_4 -alkyl)aminocarbonyl- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, phenyl or C_1 - C_4 -alkylphenyl or

R^7 and R^8 together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached form a saturated or unsaturated 3-, 4-, 5-, 6- or 7-membered nitrogen heterocycle which may optionally contain one or two further heteroatoms selected from the group consisting of nitrogen, sulfur and oxygen as ring members, which may contain 1 or 2 carbonyl and/or thiocarbonyl groups as ring members and/or which may be substituted by one, two or three substituents selected from the group consisting of C_1 - C_4 -alkyl and halogen,

R^9 is hydrogen, hydroxyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_1 - C_4 -alkoxy, phenyl, phenyl- C_1 - C_4 -alkyl, C_3 - C_6 -alkenyl or C_3 - C_6 -alkynyl,

45 R^{10} is hydrogen, C_1 - C_4 -alkyl or amino,

R^{11} is C_1 - C_4 -alkyl or C_1 - C_4 -haloalkyl,

R¹² is hydrogen or C₁-C₄-alkyl,

R¹³, R^{13'} independently of one another are hydrogen or C₁-C₄-alkyl,

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R¹⁴ is halogen,

R¹⁵ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄-alkyl,

R¹⁶ is C₁-C₄-haloalkyl, C₁-C₄-alkylthio, C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyl or C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyloxy,

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R¹⁷ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄-alkyl,

R¹⁸ is hydrogen, C₁-C₄-alkyl or amino,

R¹⁹ is C₁-C₄-haloalkyl, C₁-C₄-alkylthio or C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyl,

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R²⁰ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄-alkyl,

R²¹ is hydrogen, halogen or C₁-C₄-alkyl,

R²² is C₁-C₄-alkyl, C₁-C₄-haloalkyl, C₁-C₄-haloalkoxy, C₁-C₄-alkylthio or C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyl,

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R²³ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄-alkyl,

or

R²² and R²³ together with the atoms to which they are attached form a 5-, 6- or 7-membered saturated or unsaturated ring which may contain a heteroatom selected from the group consisting of oxygen and nitrogen as a ring-forming atom and/or which may be substituted by one, two or three radicals selected from the group consisting of C₁-C₄-alkyl and halogen,

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R²⁴ is hydrogen, C₁-C₄-alkyl or C₁-C₄-haloalkyl,

R²⁵ is C₁-C₄-alkyl or C₁-C₄-haloalkyl,

or

R²⁴ and R²⁵ together with the atoms to which they are attached form a 5-, 6- or 7-membered saturated or unsaturated ring which optionally contains an oxygen atom as ring-forming atom and/or which may be substituted by one, two or three radicals selected from the group consisting of C₁-C₄-alkyl and halogen,

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R²⁶ is hydrogen, C₁-C₄-alkyl or C₁-C₄-haloalkyl,

R²⁷ is hydrogen, C₁-C₄-alkyl or C₁-C₄-haloalkyl,

or

R²⁶ and R²⁷ together with the atoms to which they are attached form a 5-, 6- or 7-membered saturated or unsaturated ring which optionally contains an oxygen atom as ring-forming atom and/or which may be substituted by one, two or three

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radicals selected from the group consisting of
C₁-C₄-alkyl and halogen,

5 A¹, A², A³, A⁴ are each independently of one another oxygen or
sulfur,

and its agriculturally useful salts.

- 10 2. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in claim 1 where R² is
fluorine, chlorine or hydrogen.
3. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in claim 1 or 2 where R³
is chlorine or cyano.
- 15 4. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of the preceding
claims where X is oxygen.
5. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of the preceding
claims where R⁶ is hydrogen.
- 20 6. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5
where R¹ is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-A in
which R¹⁰ is C₁-C₄-alkyl or amino, R¹¹ is C₁-C₄-haloalkyl and
R¹² is hydrogen.
- 25 7. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5
where R¹ is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-B in
which R¹³ and R^{13'} are each independently of one another
C₁-C₄-alkyl.
- 30 8. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5
where R¹ is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-C in
which R¹⁴ is fluorine or chlorine, R¹⁵ is hydrogen and R¹⁶ is
C₁-C₄-haloalkyl, C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyl or
35 C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyloxy.
9. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5
where R¹ is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-D in
which R¹⁸ is hydrogen, methyl or amino, R¹⁹ is C₁-C₄-haloalkyl
40 or C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyl and R²⁰ is hydrogen.
10. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5
where R¹ is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-E in
which R²¹ is halogen or C₁-C₄-alkyl, R²² is C₁-C₄-haloalkyl,
45 C₁-C₄-haloalkoxy or C₁-C₄-alkylsulfonyl and R²³ is C₁-C₄-alkyl.

11. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5 where R^1 is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-F in which R^{24} is hydrogen, methyl, difluoromethyl or trifluoromethyl, R^{25} is methyl or trifluoromethyl or R^{24} together with R^{25} are a chain of the formula $-(CH_2)_4-$.
12. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5 where R^1 is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-G in which A^1 and A^2 are each oxygen.
13. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 5 where R^1 is a heterocyclic radical of the formula II-H in which R^{26} and R^{27} are each independently of one another C_1 - C_4 -alkyl or C_1 - C_4 -haloalkyl or R^{26} together with R^{27} are a chain of the formulae $-CH_2-O-(CH_2)_2-$ or $-(CH_2)_4-$.
14. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 13 where
 R^2 is hydrogen, chlorine or fluorine,
 R^3 is chlorine or cyano,
 R^6 is hydrogen and
 X is oxygen.
15. A benzoic acid derivative as claimed in any of claims 1 to 14 where R^4 or R^5 is hydrogen and the other radical R^4 or R^5 is C_1 - C_4 -alkyl or R^4 , R^5 are each methyl.
16. A composition comprising a herbicidally effective amount of at least one 3-heterocyclyl-substituted benzoic acid derivative of the formula I or an agriculturally useful salt of I as claimed in any of claims 1 to 15 and at least one inert liquid and/or solid carrier and, if desired, at least one surfactant.
17. A composition for the desiccation/defoliation of plants, comprising an amount of at least one 3-heterocyclyl-substituted benzoic acid derivative of the formula I or an agriculturally useful salt of I as claimed in any of claims 1 to 15 which acts as a desiccant/defoliant and at least one inert liquid and/or solid carrier and, if desired, at least one surfactant.
18. A method for controlling unwanted vegetation, which comprises allowing a herbicidally effective amount of at least one 3-heterocyclyl-substituted benzoic acid derivative of the formula I or an agriculturally useful salt of I as claimed in

any of claims 1 to 15 to act on plants, their habitat and/or on seed.

5 19. A method for the desiccation/defoliation of plants, which comprises allowing an amount which is effective as a desiccant/defoliant of at least one 3-heterocyclyl-substituted benzoic acid derivative of the formula I or an agriculturally useful salt of I as claimed in any of claims 1 to 15 to act on plants.

10 20. The use of 3-heterocyclyl-substituted benzoic acid derivatives of the formula I or their agriculturally useful salts as claimed in any of claims 1 to 15 as herbicides or for the desiccation/defoliation of plants.

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